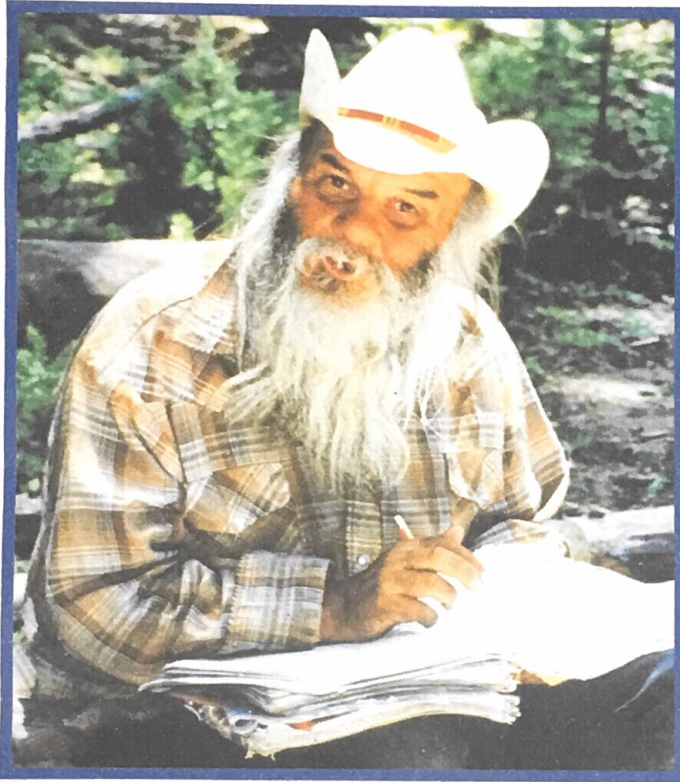




# Rainbow Family Life Stories



by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.

Scanned in 2018.

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05.M RED DAVE - "With God's Help  
We'll Continue"

- interviewed at the Oregon  
Gathering in 1978

14 pages

[05.M]



RED DAVE With God's Help We'll Continue

[I took down Red Dave's life story at the Oregon Gathering in 1978. It shows many of the classic runaway patterns of the late Sixties.]

RED DAVE - I was born in a little town in Iowa in 1952. My father, he's a lineman for the electric company. He still climbs up there. We lived in that same town until I was five. Then we moved to another town in Iowa until I was nine. Then we moved to the low-rent district of LA. The city was quite a change from the country. It kind of blew my mind. I was used to white middle class kids and then I was in LA with whites, blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. All the kids in my school were hustling and stealing and sniffing glue.

My old man left when I was 11. My parents got divorced. That drove me to drinking and sniffing glue, smoking pot and getting crazy - all the things the kids around me did. We were pretty poor and things weren't mellow. My mother was working soldering transistors, and I was left alone with the brothers on the street who were fucking up a good bit. I started hitchhiking when I was 11 to the beach and around.

I was arrested several times when I was a juvenile for several things, from possession of drugs to curfew. Some of my dealings with the police made me realize I totally dislike authority. Cause when you're in the city and you're 11 years old and you're drinking a gallon of wine with your friends, when the man comes, you got to book it.

When I was 13, I took Owsley acid for the first time. I decided that the white world was all plastic, the houses were all plastic. Then the next day when I looked at the ground and the ground was still breathing, I realized I was never going to be the same again. I was going to be a freak for all time. It revealed things in nature that the cops and school and all that bullshit wouldn't tell. So I started taking acid once a week.

I used to cop my acid from a brother in the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]. I knew a couple of other brothers who were at



the college handing out SDS pamphlets and I would get their literature and distribute it for them. It was pretty right on, because that was the Vietnam war time.

I started dealing when I was 14, because you could make fairly good money and there wasn't as much paranoia as stealing. I dealt my way through high school. When I was 16, I was strung out on downers a lot, because it eased the pain of the city.

It was a lot of good things happening then, a lot of good music, meeting up with freaks from all over the country. I didn't hitch all around the country - just to different parts of California. California was big enough to be all the world - hip book stores and bars and black light rooms and pool halls. I was strung out on city ways. I graduated from high school early. I was real smart.

The first time I went to the Haight, I was 17. I was around San Francisco and northern California a lot. I went up to Russian River and made silver rings with a brother. Me and him went up into Canada to Vancouver in 1971. At that time they were going to build this hotel next to Stanley Park. All the people said, "You ain't gonna build this," and they knocked down the walls and moved in and called it Mad City. They had bands play there all the time. A woman gave up her fruit stand and came to Mad City and gave all her fruit away to the people. I really dug the Canadian people. They seemed so much more freer than Americans.

We hitched around BC and then come back to the states cause we ran out of bucks. My partner had been doing all kinds of crazy shit and I realized I didn't want to hitch hike with other people too much, because I didn't want to deal with their karma. I was always pretty much of a loner. So we split up in Washington in April, 1971, and he went back home to Mississippi and I went to LA and got busted for something and the local judge influenced me to



leave the state. He give me a year's summary probation, and living in the ghetto, I knew I couldn't go a whole year without being busted and if I was busted, I'd have to do sometime. So I went to Sebastopol, California and made rings with the brother for a while, then I went to Eugene, Oregon in 1972. By this time I had tried every drug there was I had taken LSD more than 1,000 times and I was getting a little crisp.

I worked in a youth hostel in Eugene and hung out at the Odyssey Coffee Shop in a building that was going to be tore down by urban renewal. Rent was cheap and people came there to play music. I met a lot of good, crazy folks at the hostel who told me about the Rainbow Gathering and I planned to go there. (Back in 1971 on the way to Canada, I had heard the Rainbow Farm was a free commune and I should go there, but I got lost on Smith River Road and couldn't find it.)

First before the gathering, I tried to go up to Canada and ended up in this speed freak crash pad in Spokane - a needle gallery. I didn't have any money to cross into Canada. By then it was June, 1972, so I decided to hitch to Colorado to the gathering. I got to Boulder, Colorado, about a week before the gathering. I hung around Boulder for a night waiting for the Rainbow Family's shuttle to take me up to Granby - it was Jerry Rubin's bus. He was going to the gathering telling everybody to sugar gas tanks because it would stop all the pollution in the world. He said he would sugar his own gas tank first if everyone else would do it.

While I was waiting for the bus, I met with the STP Family. Boulder at that time was really hot - the man was coming down and you had to find a sneaky place to crash for the night. And the STP Family was going down the street panhandling and if someone wouldn't give them money, they'd spit on him or beat him up. But they were always willing to share with the poor people on the street. That's the first time I ever heard of Bear.

I took the shuttle to the gathering parking lot. The road block was up. You couldn't go into the gathering. There must have been 2,000 people in the parking lot at least. It was beautiful - all your brothers and sisters



from all over the country - and the government wouldn't let them in the gathering. So I found out there was going to be a group of people try to walk in the gathering. I left with them about 3:30 in the morning. We had to sneak through the town of Granby and down the railroad tracks and back up Seven-Mile Creek. There was about 200 of us - everybody was walking on their tiptoes, carrying all their shit, not making any noise. We got part way up the creek and daylight hit after about four or five miles. I started talking around and I wanted to know who was leading the whole thing. It turned out one was an Indian from Peru and one was a white dude and they didn't have a topographical map. They had looked at one once, but they didn't know where the fuck they were going.

So I decided I was going to find my own way in there. I ended up walking about four miles to a cliff. Then I come back and went to get some water in the creek. When I come back, all them people had disappeared, following them two dudes. This whole time there had been planes and helicopters flying overhead looking for people and you had to hide under the bushes and the trees because you didn't want the government to know that was the way people were getting in.

I walked the other way. I slept out that night. The next day I walked out of the road block, with a fucking sheriff there. It really blew his mind to see someone walking out of the road block at the next little town about 11 miles back from Granby. Then I hitched back to the parking lot. They were having a council and they said at council that everybody was walking through the road block at five. It was 11 a.m., so I decided I had better get some sleep.

At five I got a ride to the road block. Everybody else walked. There must have been 5,000 people by this time. We crashed the road block and everybody knew the gathering was on. I ended up walking all but a mile of the eight miles up there because none of the shuttles would stop at the end of the trail. I met all the beautiful brothers and sisters saying, "Welcome home," and it



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really did feel like home because all the other people looked like me.

I got to the gathering at 12:30 at night, ate some pancakes and went to bed. They had kitchens going 24 hours. Everyone was bushed by the time they got there. The gathering was really a beautiful sight. I walked around and checked out the people, took some sweets, swam in the lake. I really saw how by having the gathering, the energy could be spread to farms and communities all over the country and people could fulfill their dreams. You could meet people who could show you how to fulfill your dreams. Like someone would say, "Yeah, I'll come out to your farm and show you how to build this or that."

I saw the white buffalo and I almost expected the world to end right there. A lot of things I saw there told me it was real close - like I read clouds. I had never heard of the Hopi prophecies before, but when I heard them there, I knew they were true from what I had learned on LSD.

I met Barry walking around with his one-string plunker at the gathering, and he seemed pretty right on - like he knew what he was doing - even if he didn't. I met Dominic - he was up in a tree loaded on acid playing monkey. He was going to jump on some friends of his just to tease them. I met a lot of the STP people at the gathering. I was camping just below them. Goldfinger was having quite the crazy party. He was sniffing gold paint with a crowd of people following him. The first time I saw Bear, it was night and he was walking down the trail with two other brothers and three sisters. They was so loaded on whiskey and acid, Bear was holding onto a dog's tail for the dog to lead them back into camp.

I didn't walk up to Table Mountain. Walking into a marsh had destroyed my boots - pulled a heel off. Besides I was too tired after all the walking I had done.

I left the gathering on the fifth of July and went back to Boulder. I kind of wondered why I had been to the gathering, but I knew I would see the Family again. I wanted to stay for clean-up, but



they wouldn't let me. There must have been 10,000 people who wanted to stay for clean-up, but they wanted to get them out.

It took me three days to hitch out Boulder because there was so many people from the gathering trying to hitch out. I stayed at this Jesus freak place with some STP people. Everybody was sleeping on the Jesus freak lawn. It was the only place in town the cops would let you sleep without harassing you.

Somebody stole my sleeping bag out of that place. They blamed the STP people, but it's hard to tell. It was a pretty open scene.

I left Boulder and got a ride to Wyoming. I was going to the East Coast, but I went as far as Detroit and decided I was going to Canada. I crossed the border with \$8. I went to Toronto. It was like a street fair, the streets blocked off. All the cafes had tables out in the street like in France. I stayed in a youth hostel and had hamburgers and French fries and breakfast next day all for a quarter.

After being in the mountains for so long, I didn't want to be in a city. So I hitched across Canada to Vancouver. I got a ride with a brother with 900 pounds of soapstone hash pipes in a Volkswagen. He had his trunk and his back seat full of them. So we traveled across Canada selling hash pipes and smoking hash. Then I lived on a nude beach in Vancouver till I was too sunburnt to handle it.

I went down to California after that because a brother had got drafted. I told him to book and go to Canada, but he got sucked into the Army. I almost got busted for smoking hash with him on Fort Ord. Then I went back up to Washington to pick fruit. Then I went to Berkeley. The night I got there was the first rainstorm of the year, and someone stole my boots, my hat and my glasses. So I went to LA and sold some dope and hustled some new glasses and boots. Then I went to Arizona. I hung out in Tucson for a month with a lot of STP people that I had met at the gathering. Then I hitched to Mississippi and then Tennessee to see some folks. Then back to Arizona and up to Oregon in Spring. I saw an invitation for the Wyoming Rainbow Gathering and saw it



was going to be on an Indian reservation. It was right after Wounded Knee, so I thought that it was crazy to have it there and we should leave the Indians alone. I saw Barry and talked to him about it. We both came to the conclusion that Patterson of the Christ Brotherhood, the man who called that gathering, was crazy. Barry said he wasn't going and I said I wasn't going either. I stayed in Oregon that summer and met a new group of Family, ate a lot of acid and drank a lot of wine. Then I went up to Washington, then I went down to Arizona and worked in a bar and hung out with a lot of STP crazies. I worked in the gutter, becoming an alcoholic to the max.

I drank my way back north to Oregon. I don't even remember how I got there. Then I ran into some of the old Family I'd lived with the summer before. Kilo was up there. We started eating a lot of peyote, really getting into the medicine. Dominic came down from Washington and we got a caravan together and headed for the 1974 Gathering in Utah. The first day on the road, I got sick. I threw up. Second day I got sicker. Somebody in the caravan looked at my eyes and said, "I think you have hepatitis."

We went to a hospital in Winnemucca, Nevada. I had a fever of 103 and all the symptoms of hep. They told me I couldn't see the doctor unless I give them \$25. The police came to the hospital while we were there because the nurses got panicked because there was so many of us there looking into windows. There was a dozen of us or so. We became the Dirty Dozen. The nurse and the sheriff told us, "Hit the road, Jack and tell other people like yourselves that Winnemucca ain't where it's at." So then, I threatened to kiss every card dealer in their town, and the cops ran us out of town and followed us to make sure we got out of every town in Nevada quickly.

We got to Utah and went to the hospital in Cedar City and they told me that I had hepatitis and gave me two shots and everybody else one shot. Then we went to Zion Park. At that time the people were there for the gathering and not at the other place. That's where I met Chuck Wind Song. We stayed in Zion for a couple of days and then went over to the reservoir at Enterprise because everybody decided to have the gathering there because Zion National Park was too much hassle.



Me and Dallas ran shuttle for a couple of days from Zion over to Enterprise. We got back one afternoon. It was really hot and I was pretty burnt out, so I went swimming in the reservoir. When I came out, here come these four county health department officials - Mormons - and a sheriff. The first name they called was mine and proceeded to call off the rest of the Dirty Dozen and said that they wanted to council with us all.

First they said that everybody at the gathering had to leave and then they said that just the Dirty Dozen had to leave. Then we got it together that none of us had to leave. The Dozen was not to go swimming and have their own shitter and the Health Department was to come out and give shots to those that wanted them. There was a dude who said he'd pay for any shots that people didn't have the money to pay for. He left without paying.

A couple of nights later, there was a peyote meeting. I got over there. I wasn't supposed to eat any peyote because I had hep and the alkaloids would really fuck up my liver. After everybody got it down, somebody started talking and then White Dove started yelling and screaming that she was the Mother Earth and all this stuff. Then her and Dominic got into a scream-out and then this homosexual brother stood up and said somebody should fuck him in the ass. I decided if anyone ate some peyote after this, it would be bad. The Spirit would play a lot of tricks on them because they weren't respecting the peyote, so I walked away. As I walked away, this brother gave me a piece of plastic made into a refracting glass that made four medicine crosses of rainbows if you looked at any light. I watched the moon for a while and then went to bed.

I got to know Bear a lot better at Utah. Then I went back to Oregon and then to Highbridge Park about a month later. It used to be the dump for Spokane, Washington. It was a nasty place, left-over filth. About 400 or 500 people was there. It varied day by day. I took some acid one night there and I was walking down by



where a creek comes in the river. I was looking at the moon in the river and all of a sudden, I heard voices yelling behind me.

When I turned around, up in the sky there was a bottle. The cavalry was attacking the Indian lodges. You see, 100 years ago, the cavalry had attacked a Nez Perce Indian village on this spot. It was a camp of women and children, the warriors weren't there. I saw the bloody massacre, the cavalry killing women and children. Right at the very end as the vision disappeared, a US Air Force jet flew over my head and I flashed on the fact that the very same thing could happen to us.

Then I went and got drunk at a brother's house to bring off the acid, because I was so freaked out. After that, me and Dominic got turned on to a bus and went back to Oregon. The bus broke down in Oregon and we fixed it and went to Northern California and it broke again. We spent 2½ months trying to fix it. We fixed it and drove down to Bisbee, Arizona in February, 1975. The bus blew up going into Bisbee. The bus still to this day makes it to its destination and blows up. Catfish has got it now. I give the bus over to Dominic and went to Tucson and went in the desert and started eating some medicine and started hanging out where I felt like hanging out.

I hitched to the 1975 Arkansas Gathering and the Family picked me up on the way. Marsha recognized me. Her and Freedom took me in a pickup to Ebby's place in Snowball. I got there June 1. We lived at Ebby's and everything was pretty mellow except we couldn't find a gathering site. The hillbillies' biggest joke was all these hippies that had ticks on them who would pull the ticks off and not kill them.

We went down to Lake Hinkel after Michael Sun and Rainbow Atma talked us into it. What a fucking joke! I almost got struck by a lightning bolt that night that hit a tree ten feet above my head as I was sleeping in a truck. I knew then that that wasn't the place to be.

The next day me and Phil Coyote went down and saw this man-made lake with a 24-hour electrical generator hum. To this day I hold it against Michael Sun and will until I die. So we left there and went back to Ebby's. The next day Barry and Chuck Wind Song showed up



and I knew that the medicine was right. A couple days later, they found a spot called Kyle's Landing. I had to fix all the broken trucks at Ebby's so they could go. A couple of days later, I went to the gathering myself, except it had been moved to Big Flat. I spent a lot of time running the parking lot. I was gathering wood when the sheriff's posse came down and started shooting. They surrounded us all up and then everybody OMed and they went away with one girl and four guys.

The night of the peyote meeting, I was in the parking lot talking to Peckwah, one of Peter Schuppy's dogs, because nobody came in the parking lot all that night. I was pretty loaded on acid and ginseng. So it was all right. After the gathering, I went to Ebby's for a day and rested up. I hitched back to Oregon and hung out at the hot springs a lot. Then I went up to Washington. I was hanging out with Kilo and Marsha and other Family. After that I went back to Arizona for the winter. Bear and Jimmer and Peanut showed up and 11 of us drank about 30 pounds of peyote buttons boiled down into about a quart. It was pure light. The taste was nothing. We moved out in the Desert House. Me and Phil Coyote and Bear did a lot of things with peyote that I'm influenced by for good these days. It makes me a lot humbler.

Then me and Bear and Kilo and Peanut moved to a hot springs in New Mexico. Then we went to the All One Family's spring gathering at Eden, Arizona. It was interesting. It was a lot of our Family trying to show the All One Family how to be free and not be so hung up on money. We wouldn't pay them any admission at their gate. After a while, we gave them food stamps. We just wanted to show them we had been doing gatherings for free for so long, we were amazed they were charging for a gathering that didn't last nearly as long as ours. We gave the sweat lodges at Eden. We wanted to show a little Indian medicine. They had thought sweats were like a sauna where you get hot and fuck and suck.



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After that we went to New Mexico. Then we went next to the Navajo reservation and I spent a couple of months with Bear, Peanut, Tipi Bob, Annie Crow Lady and Peter So Happy, planting corn with the Navajos and learning their ways. Then I went straight to the Montana Gathering. I got there June 22, 1976. There were only 50 people there when I got there. It was flowing together pretty good. There was the whole thing about us versus

the Bureau of Indian Affairs - the BIA trying to tell us that we couldn't go across the Blackfoot Reservation July 4 to make a circle on the Canadian border. I met Adolph Hungry Wolf in Montana and took a couple of sweats with him and learned some songs. I got to meet his wife and then got to meet all his kids when we made the circle on the Canadian border. God bless them.

The gathering place in Montana was split because of the forks of the creek. The people who hung out on one fork at the Carnival Cafe's camp, a lot of them were All One Family people. They thought they were higher than the other camp, which was mostly street people. I wish that both camps could have been together instead of getting down on each other. The Carnival Camp people said, "That other camp is so first chakra we can't associate with them." That means they thought the other camp lived too much in the physical world.

On the way back from the circle at the Canadian border, a brother who took 25 people to the border took off into Canada and left 23 people. So me and Barry and Peter So Happy stayed overnight with these people at St. Mary's on the reservation and tried to find a way to get them back to the gathering. It took 20 hours. The bus they sent to come get us broke down on the reservation and the Indians stripped it. The next day we talked a guy we met into taking 11 people back in his camper. We gave him some gas money. Then we met a guy who was leaving the gathering in a van going to East Glacier Park, but when he found out we were stuck on the reservation, he took the rest of us back to the gathering. We got drunk on the way and I come back yelling at people that they were fucked for leaving us out there for 20



hours on the reservation where the Indians wanted to kill us. The BIA had told them a lot of lies about us.

Then I packed up, cleaned up for a couple of days. Me and Dominic were the last to leave the Montana Gathering site. After that, I went down through Idaho to Oregon. I stayed there most of the summer, then I went to the Barter Fair in Washington. I went to Santa Fe after that and me and Dominic and Jayson and Feather went to a meeting with the Forest Service a couple of days before Thanksgiving. We told them we wanted the 1977 Gathering in the Gila Wilderness in southern New Mexico. They told us that was all right, that northern New Mexico was too hot politically because the Chicanos wouldn't like the gathering there.

Then I went to Arizona and spent part of the winter there. I'd go back and forth to Arizona to gather stones to make jewelry. The last of March, Phil Coyote came down from Oregon. Then we hitched to Texas in four days and hung out with Kilo and Marsha and saw their new baby Ezekiel. We were there for a week. Kilo had the Stone of Many Faces and he was getting kind of crazy. I had a dream that we should liberate the Stone from him on April Fool's Day. Phil Coyote didn't want to do it on April Fool's, so we finally did it on Palm Sunday.

We left Austin at six in the morning with the Stone and hitched to Santa Fe by four the next afternoon. In Santa Fe we ran into Gary and Mariah and they told us that Pip was coming out there and we were gonna council on Easter about the gathering. The day after Easter we gave Pip the Stone because he asked for it. Then me and Phil Coyote went and picked up Debbie in Albuquerque and this other sister. We got Debbie's car and went over to Arizona. Then I went back to New Mexico and ended up in Llanos. Chuck Wind Song was there. Me and him went to Arizona and saw the Ruby Focus folks who believe they have a direct channel to Buddha. They're really into colors and rays - stuff like that.



Then me and Chuck WindSong hitched up to Zion Park. We met this brother who took us to a hot springs and then to his house. We ate some peyote and that whole night was like to purify his karma for having tried to sell peyote to other people. It took us all night talking to him. Next day Chuck WindSong took off for Washington state and I went to Nevada. From Nevada I hitched to Iowa. Then I was walking down the road in Iowa and this girl picks me up and says "I'd love to take you to New Mexico." In 2 1/2 days we were in Santa Fe. Chuck WindSong was there. Me and him and a couple of Christ Brotherhood folks that he knows went down to the gathering. Bear and Kilo were in the parking lot. About 30 or 40 people was already at the gathering.

The day I got there, Gypsydake and Two Feather had dug up an Indian burial mound and took a skull and carried it around for half a day. Crazy John took it away from them and buried it again. Gypsydake and Two Feather went on to El Paso and got busted for peyote and missed the gathering because of that skull.

Me and Chuck WindSong and Gary found a spring at what we called Serenity Canyon. We dug a pool for it. A few days later I set up a sweat lodge. We did a real good sweat in it. After that, a blue heron flew to left over the sweat four times. On the fourth time, he dipped his wing and made a tight circle and a whirlwind started out of the sweat lodge and blew all the covering off the lodge.

In New Mexico walking at night I'd have a lot of encounters. I'd feel something and turn around and see a light about 2 1/2 feet high. One night I was on fire watch, this crazy fucker had set off a flare. Just before the morning star came up, I thought I saw the morning star, but as it came up, I saw the morning star come up underneath it. What I had thought was the morning star came in over the valley. It was a ball of light about four feet across. Hobbitt was the only other person to see that. Everybody else was asleep. Then the ball of light went back into the dawn and disappeared.

The gathering started getting more together - more people showing up.



I went to the parking lot the night of the full moon. Everybody working it disappeared on me and I ended up running the parking lot for three days. On the Fourth of July I walked up to the hill where everybody was at and I saw rainbows around the sun and crosses in the sky. I wasn't even high. I was there praying with everybody and went down to the tipi circle. Pip had broke the bottom part of the Stone into seven pieces. Me and Phil Coyote and Chuck Wind Sag and Bear and Gary took the seven pieces of the Stone and threw them in the Gila River. Right after that came the big double rainbow, the brightest I had ever seen.

Then the gathering pretty much dwindled down and ended. A girl asked, "Do you want a ride?" and took me to Albuquerque and bought me all the blueberry pie a la mode I could eat, and all the coffee I could drink. Then I went to a pig roast in Llano and then I hitched to Montana. From there I hitched down to Oregon, then back to Montana. After that I went to Washington, then back to Oregon, then back to Washington. All this in a month and a half.

I spent the winter in Washington in the snow in a tipi to rest and relax and mellow out from all this weird bullshit. I needed rest from the road. Phil Coyote came up there. He was a total fucking bizarro. I threatened to kill him and fuck him and eat him 20 times at least.

Only God knows what all this means and with his help we'll continue.

[Red Dave settled in the Okanagan Valley of Washington state. When the Washington Gathering was looking for a place in 1981, Red Dave helped with a petition to keep the gathering out of the Okanagan Valley because of its disruptive influence. Yet when Phil Coyote wrote a negative article on Rainbow while working for an Okanagan Valley newspaper, Red Dave went to him to protest.]